

Transcription: Floyd Jackson

My name is Tom Cengle. I'm with the Texas General Land Office. Today is Wednesday, October the 8th, 2008. It's approximately 2 o'clock in the afternoon. I am interviewing Mr. Floyd Jackson by telephone interview. I am located at the General Land Office and Mr. Jackson is at his home. The interview is in support of the Voices of Veterans Program of the State of Texas Veterans Land Board. The purpose is to create a permanent record of military service experiences of veterans. Mr. Jackson, as you know, I am about to interview you relating to your military experiences. The interview is by telephone and I will be using a tape recorder to record this interview. The interview will be transcribed and made into a permanent record at the Veterans Land Board in Austin, Texas. Does the Veterans Land Board have your permission and consent to conduct this interview and make it a part of the permanent records of the Veterans Land Board?

Floyd Jackson: Yeah.

OK. Now the format for this interview, the purpose of the interview is to record your recollections of your military experience. We follow somewhat a question and answer format, but please feel free to expand on your answers and add anything that you think may be helpful in refreshing your recollections so that future generations will have the opportunity to know what it was like for you during your military life and how those experiences shaped your life since then. We understand that some of your experiences may be difficult to discuss, and if so, you are free to limit the interview to the extent you are comfortable in relating the experiences. OK, are we ready to commence with your history?

Floyd Jackson: Yeah.

OK, let's start with the basics. Would you give me your name and present address?

Floyd Jackson: Floyd Andrew Jackson. My address, 17670 Crow Range Road, Slado, Texas. What's the zip code? 76571.

OK. Mr. Jackson, could you give me some of your family information from when you were born and to the present?

Floyd Jackson: I live on the place I was born on. My daddy – my granddaddy come from Georgia. When my daddy was 12 years old, he bought the place, and I own the place that he bought, my grandpa bought.

So you're essentially living on the same place that your grandfather and your father lived on.

Floyd Jackson: Right.

OK. And tell me a little bit about your father and mother.

Floyd Jackson: Well, my father and mother, my daddy died when he was 86, and my mother died when she was 89.

OK. And do you have any brothers or sisters?

Floyd Jackson: Yes, I had, there was nine of us. The five brothers and four sisters.

Woah, you had a nice long family.

Floyd Jackson: Yeah.

And how many of those are alive today?

Floyd Jackson: I got one sister and she's in a nursing home, and I'm 85.

And you're 85. So you and her are the last of the family.

Floyd Jackson: Yeah, that's right.

OK. And what did your father do for a living?

Floyd Jackson: He farmed and ranched here on the place, this place where I live. No, no, he had a place over about a mile from my place.

OK, and he was a farmer or rancher?

Floyd Jackson: Farmer and rancher, yeah.

OK, and when you were growing up, did you participate in that business? Family business?

Floyd Jackson: Yes sir. Yeah.

OK, and I assume all of you did.

Floyd Jackson: Yeah, I was farming on the place with my dad when I went in the Army.

OK, and were any of your other family members, your brothers or sisters, in the military during that time?

Floyd Jackson: Yeah, I had my youngest brother that was three years younger than me was in the Army. He was in the Pacific and I was in Europe.

OK, so your younger brother and you were the two who participated in the military.

Floyd Jackson: Right.

OK. Could you give me a little bit of your educational background before you entered the military?

Floyd Jackson: I went to a little country schoolhouse down in Cedar Valley, about three miles from where I live, walked to school through the pasture. That's where I got my education, and I just went to, through the 7th Grade. That's all the education I had.

OK, you went through the 7th Grade.

Floyd Jackson: Right.

And then after that, basically worked on the family farm?

Floyd Jackson: Right.

OK, and how old were you when you entered the military?

Floyd Jackson: I was 19 I guess, nearly 20.

OK, and do you recall what year it was when you entered?

Floyd Jackson: Yeah, 24th of February, '44, when I went in the Army at Fort Sam Houston.

OK, and was that by volunteer or draft?

Floyd Jackson: Draft.

You were drafted.

Floyd Jackson: Yep.

OK, and you entered the U.S. Army?

Floyd Jackson: Yes, Infantry.

OK, and you were drafted into the Infantry.

Floyd Jackson: Yeah.

So we don't have to ask you why you entered the military. You entered it because you were told to enter it.

Floyd Jackson: Right.

OK. Do you recall December 7th, 1941, Pearl Harbor Day? Do you remember where you were and what you were doing?

Floyd Jackson: Yeah, I was here on the farm then. I remember it when it happened.

How did you know that, how did you learn of it?

Floyd Jackson: I heard it on the radio.

OK, and you would have been about what, 16 or 17 at that time?

Floyd Jackson: Oh, I was 17 or 18.

OK. All right. And you were, let's see, you were close to 20 when you went into the service by draft. Were you surprised that you lasted so long before you were drafted?

Floyd Jackson: Well, what age – I forgot what age they started drafting.

At 18.

Floyd Jackson: Well, well I must have been, I must not have been that old then. I was 18 I guess when they started. I went as soon as they started drafting, I was drafted.

Oh, OK.

Floyd Jackson: Well, I wasn't 19 then. I wasn't 19 or 20. When they started drafting, that's when they got me.

OK, and how long after they drafted you before you were sent somewhere?

Floyd Jackson: I went to – when the 24th – when I was drafted at Fort – when I went in in Fort Sam Houston the 24th of February, I come back home and I went back to Fort Sam Houston the 3rd of March, and I was shipped to Fort Lewis Washington. That's where I take my basic – Fort Lewis Washington. And I was there and I take my basic training at Yakamo Valley, that Mt. Ranier, where snow stayed on it all the time.

Yes.

Floyd Jackson: That's where I take my training. It was cold. We stayed out in the woods most of the time training.

Was that your first experience outside of Texas?

Floyd Jackson: Yup, that's it.

OK, so until you were drafted and sent to Fort Lewis Washington, you hadn't been out of Texas?

Floyd Jackson: No, uh-uh. No, that was the coldest place I was ever in.

Yeah, I'll bet after Texas.

Floyd Jackson: In foxholes, you'd freeze to death.

And so you went through basic training in Fort Lewis Washington.

Floyd Jackson: Right.

Were any of your buddies that you knew or anything from where you lived go with you, or were you pretty much on your own?

Floyd Jackson: No, I was on my own.

And do you recall how long your basic training was?

Floyd Jackson: Oh, I don't remember just how long, but it was pretty long, but then we went to, went on maneuvers in Camp ____.

OK, but let's stay with basic training for a little bit. Do you recall some of the things that you were required to do in basic training?

Floyd Jackson: Oh, we stayed in, we had marches, forced marches and well, all kinds of physical stuff, and courses we had to go through like under forest stuff, you know, like we did in combat, and obstacle courses, everything that just like we was in combat.

Did you live in a barracks or tents?

Floyd Jackson: Well, we lived in barracks sometimes, but most of the time we was out in the woods – bill whacking they called it. We done most of our training out in the woods.

Do you recall what were some of the most difficult things that you had to deal with when you were in basic training?

Floyd Jackson: Well, it was sleeping in the foxholes and it was the weather, the cold weather and the hard things that we had to do that was physical, real hard spending physical stuff that we had to go through.

So your recollections are basically mostly the cold and the hard work.

Floyd Jackson: Yeah. It was so cold for the Texas people wasn't used to.

I'll bet not.

Floyd Jackson: It was cold.

What did you think you missed most from civilian life once you got in?

Floyd Jackson: Well, this service thing, the Army was completely different than what civilian life was at that young age that I was, you know. It was just completely different.

OK. And did you find that time to be a good time that you remember in your life or was it a tough time for you?

Floyd Jackson: Well, it was tough because we, what we had to go through to get in shape and everything, but you know, we hadn't been used to that all of us, and we had forced marched that we had to do to get in shape. I know one time we had a forced march of 25 miles that we had to make and a lot of the boys would just fall out because they couldn't make it, you know. We had to do that before, to get in shape before we went overseas.

Was there any particular characters, guys that really stick out in your memory from basic training?

Floyd Jackson: Yeah, there's one guy there that he never did get used to it, I guess. He just couldn't get used to the Army ways. The sergeant sort of rode him because he didn't get used to the Army ways. He just couldn't get used to it, but he did make a good soldier after all.

As a young Texas boy, you were kind of torn out of Texas, sent up to Washington, and you began to meet people from other parts of the country.

Floyd Jackson: Yeah, right. There was a lot of 'em from the northern states up there and from New York and New Jersey and stuff, and they was different to what the southern people was. There was a lot of southern people in there, too, and but we got along fine. I was in a good outfit. We got along fine.

Good, so you didn't have any problems meeting new people and getting used to their ways and things such as that?

Floyd Jackson: Oh no, we didn't have no problem whatsoever. In fact, I wrote to some guys after I got out that was up there and I was, some good buddies was from other states.

OK, anything else that you recollect from basic training that you'd like to pass on?

Floyd Jackson: No, I reckon not.

OK, that's good. OK, once you finished basic training, then what happened to you?

Floyd Jackson: We went to – I don't remember how long we was in Fort Lewis Washington. We was in there a good way out. Anyway, I got one furlough from Fort Lewis Washington to home. Anyhow, I got on a train, a Union Pacific train. I got a 15-day furlough, and it'd taken 7 days traveling time. I got, that old Union Pacific is a slower train, got to Denver, Colorado, got on a Texas Zephyr and then I come home. That was a fast train. And take 7 days traveling time. I had 8 days home. Well, I got married when I was home on furlough.

I assume that's to somebody that you knew before you went into the military.

Floyd Jackson: Yeah, right, yeah.

I assume that she was somebody that was local that you met when you were younger.

Floyd Jackson: Oh yeah, that was a girl that I was engaged to before I left.

OK, you were engaged before you left.

Floyd Jackson: Yeah, yeah.

And is your wife still with you today?

Floyd Jackson: Yes.

Still the same wife.

Floyd Jackson: The 29th of May, we'll celebrate our 65th anniversary.

Wow, congratulations. That's marvelous.

Floyd Jackson: I've been a diabetic for 35 years and I can't read. It's affected my eyes, I can't read. I have to get my wife to read for me. So I've been a diabetic that long.

I've got that disease, too, and I hope I don't have the problems until much later. So you've been married 65 years to the same lady.

Floyd Jackson: 29th.

29th of May of this year.

Floyd Jackson: Yeah.

And did you have any children?

Floyd Jackson: Yes, I had three boys. I got one ____.

I'm sorry, you got three boys and - ?

Floyd Jackson: I had three boys. My middle boy, he was in the National Guard in Austin. He's in National Guard and he was marching. He didn't have to march. He was a sergeant, he was in charge and he didn't have to do the marching, but he marched with the boys and he dropped dead with a heart attack while he was marching.

Oh, I'm sorry to hear it. How long ago was that?

Floyd Jackson: He was 41.

Do you remember how long ago that was?

Floyd Jackson: About 20 years. And then I lost a leg, the same leg that I was wounded in in France three years ago? Four years ago, I lost a leg, the same one that I was wounded in in France.

Was the loss of that leg as a result of that wound over time?

Floyd Jackson: No, I had a tractor accident here on the place.

Three years ago?

Floyd Jackson: Yeah.

What are you doing out on a tractor at 80 some years old?

Floyd Jackson: Well, I shouldn't have been on it, but I was. Farmer can't quit.

OK, we'll get into that. Now you came home, you got married and I assume you knew your wife for some good time before you got married.

Floyd Jackson: Well, we'll get to that later I guess. Anyway, after that, I went on maneuvers in Louisiana.

OK, this was after your furlough, after you got married, you then went to Louisiana.

Floyd Jackson: I went back to, back to Fort Lewis. Then we went on maneuvers to Louisiana and Orange, Texas – Camp Polk.

OK, Camp Polk.

Floyd Jackson: And we maneuvered down there. And we got a break one time and I come to Houston one night and then my wife met me down there, and then that's the only time I seen her. Then I was down there I guess three months on maneuvers out in the woods, no barrack or nothing, just woods, maneuvering.

OK, and what were you being trained for? Were you being trained to be a basic infantryman or some special occupation or what?

Floyd Jackson: No, just infantryman, just well, to fight out in the woods, just regular infantryman.

OK, a regular rifleman, basic rifleman in the infantry.

Floyd Jackson: No, I wasn't a rifleman. I was a BAR man.

Oh, OK, BAR being the Browning automatic rifle.

Floyd Jackson: Yeah. I had an assistant gunner and an ammo ____ carrier. Then we went from Louisiana to Camp Phillips, Kansas.

At this time, were you assigned to a specific unit?

Floyd Jackson: 44th Infantry.

The 44th Infantry Division.

Floyd Jackson: Yeah.

So once you were at Fort Lewis, you became assigned to the 44th -

Floyd Jackson: No, I was signed to the 44th when I was in Fort Lewis.

Oh, OK.

Floyd Jackson: I was in the 44th from the beginning.

From the very beginning. So you went through basic training as a 44th Infantry Division and you stayed with them throughout the course.

Floyd Jackson: Yeah. Yeah, I was with them all the time.

OK. I'm sorry to interrupt. Go ahead on your next place.

Floyd Jackson: Then we went to Camp Phillips Kansas, and then my wife come to me up there and she stayed with me while I was up there about a month, wasn't it? Three months? She stayed with me about three months up there while I was at Camp Phillips. We rented a room from a man and a woman that lived there in Solano, Kansas. We lived there. And that's when she got pregnant with my son.

That must've been some pretty tough times on a private's pay.

Floyd Jackson: Yeah, sure was. Rough times.

But I assume that the company was worth having.

Floyd Jackson: Yeah, pretty rough times. That's where she got pregnant. Anyway, then I was shipped out.

From Kansas?

Floyd Jackson: Last time I talked to her before I shipped out, I told her that morning, I said I think I'm gonna be quarantined. I don't think I can come out tonight. I said we gonna ship out, and when we, they say well, we can't go, why I'll have to call you and tell you I won't see you no more.

That must've been pretty hard.

Floyd Jackson: Sure enough they said boys, nobody leaves. We're shipping out in the morning, nobody leaves. So I had to call my wife and tell her goodbye on the phone. That was hard to do.

I would imagine.

Floyd Jackson: So we shipped out from Providence, Rhode Island.

OK, and you shipped out by ship, I assume.

Floyd Jackson: Yeah, by ship, old cattle ship.

I'm sorry, what was the ship?

Floyd Jackson: Just an old cattle ship. We were so crowded, just had place for gear and everything, and it was so crowded and we was on the water 11 days. We went to France.

OK, so you went directly to France. You didn't stop at England or anything.

Floyd Jackson: Well, we went directly to Normandy, France.

Wow.

Floyd Jackson: And we got to France and were taking our gear on our back and our guns, went off on a rope down on a flat LCA or whatever you call it, flat outfit. Then we went ashore on Normandy, France.

Do you recall approximately what date that would have been?

Floyd Jackson: No.

It would've been maybe September of 1944?

Floyd Jackson: I guess it was. September, I guess.

Yes, because June 4th was D-Day, with the landing, the original Normandy landing, and I think your outfit went over there about a couple of months after that. So it would've been about September or so.

Floyd Jackson: Yeah, it probably was.

How did you take to the sea?

Floyd Jackson: You mean how sick?

Did you enjoy the trip, or not?

Floyd Jackson: Oh, yeah, it was all right. It was just crowded because so many of us on there. You know, we didn't have no room or nothing, and I got oozy, I didn't get sick, but it was just swing and hitting and stuff and you'd be eating on your table and you'd wind up your food would be down over on the other end sometimes. But we had one old boy that got sick the time we got 50 yards out from the shore and he stayed sick all the way over. He looked like a dead man when we got there. I'll never forget that.

That sounds like my experience.

Floyd Jackson: But I never did get sick, but that's the only boy that got sick, but boy, he looked like a dead man when we got there.

That's surprising, a Texas boy never been out to sea and you go out on the ocean, especially the Atlantic Ocean, and you don't get sea sick.

Floyd Jackson: I know. No, I didn't get sick, I just got you know, like swimmy headed and –

OK, and while you were traveling over, were you at all concerned about your safety with submarines and things such as that?

Floyd Jackson: Oh yeah, we was always thinking about it, but nothing you could do about it. We were always thinking about it, and also aircraft, bombs.

Did you have any experience of enemy either planes or ships or anything while you were coming over?

Floyd Jackson: Not on the sea, but after we got there, we did.

OK, all right. So the trip then across the ocean was other than being a little woozy and crowded was otherwise uneventful.

Floyd Jackson: We got one time the sea got pretty rough because it was sort of a little storm like, but it was pretty rough one time.

All right now, you're going overseas, you had to be or had to pretty well understand that you were eventually going to be going into combat.

Floyd Jackson: Right.

And what kind of feelings did you have about that as you were going over the ocean? Did you think about it much?

Floyd Jackson: We thought about it, but we knew we had to do it, so we didn't, we just knew where we was goin'.

Did you personally have any fears or concerns?

Floyd Jackson: No, no we knew we had it to do, so we just went on.

OK. All right, so sometime it probably was in September of '44, you landed on Normandy beaches.

Floyd Jackson: Yeah. Lot of them hedgerows.

And once you landed on the beaches and then started to move inland I assume, what was the next step for you?

Floyd Jackson: Well we went on up to the hedgerows and stuff and went on up to bypass and we was in the 7th Army, between the 7th and Patton's 3rd Army, right on that line there. That's where our fighting was.

OK, so you didn't spend a lot of time in France before you got into combat.

Floyd Jackson: No, no, we went right on up.

Right on up, OK. And your division was in place between the 3rd and 7th Army.

Floyd Jackson: Yeah, we was right, I think part of the time we was in the 3rd and part of the time we was in the 7th Army.

And do you recall the first time you heard the sound of guns?

Floyd Jackson: Yeah.

And what kind of a reaction did you have to all of that?

Floyd Jackson: Well, I know what reaction we had when we was in the shelling part, too, and artillery. That's where I got wounded.

OK.

Floyd Jackson: We was on attack. We had taken Strasbourg.

About how long was this after you got into France before you were wounded?

Floyd Jackson: After we hit France? I don't remember. It was a good while. We had taken several little towns. We went through those mountains, the passages in there, and we had taken Strasbourg and we was across, it was cold and we went across a creek.

So this was probably somewhere in, was this during the Battle of the Bulge or before that?

Floyd Jackson: It was before that.

OK, so it was before December then, so probably maybe October or November, somewhere around there?

Floyd Jackson: Yeah, it was I guess in November, I guess. Anyway, we was in sort of an open field. We was doing, went through taken Strasbourg and we was going across an open field, and they were just shelling the snot out of us, those shells, artillery, and it took my platoon sergeant in 10 foot of me when I got wounded, in 10 foot of me, he was killed, his whole side, shrapnel hit it and knocked his whole side out, and that's the same shell that got me, and we lost about I don't know, several men going across this field.

This is while you were riding on a tank?

Floyd Jackson: No, we rode on a tank before that.

OK.

Floyd Jackson: We were going through them passes, we'd hang on those tanks and then get off and start ____ and stuff.

OK, so when you were wounded, you were walking.

Floyd Jackson: Yeah, I was walking. And we was, there were several of us going across the field and I had my BAR, you know, and this sergeant, he was staff sergeant, platoon sergeant, he was the one that was killed about 10 foot of me.

Is that the first time you saw anybody die?

Floyd Jackson: Oh no, I seen lot of 'em, but I was, I counted myself pretty lucky there that time.

Did you have any close calls before that?

Floyd Jackson: Yeah. I had several close calls.

And could you describe -

Floyd Jackson: A BAR man and his ammunition carrier and his assistant gunner was always called out to be patrol, to patrol to try to find the enemy lines. We was always on patrol, so a couple of times we got cut off, but one time when we got cut off, we didn't think we was gonna get back to our company, but we fought our way back. We got back.

Were you shot at during this time?

Floyd Jackson: Yes. We didn't think we was gonna make it, but we did.

Do you remember if you ever shot anybody that you saw?

Floyd Jackson: Yeah. It was some rough times that you want to forget.

OK. All right, we don't need to talk about them if you don't want to. So there were a couple of close calls that you had before you were finally wounded.

Floyd Jackson: Yeah.

And you saw a number of your buddies killed before then, I assume.

Floyd Jackson: Yeah, that and across that field we was in, that was the worst time, but when I went down, I could see a bunch of German prisoners coming up with their hands up. I don't know how many, but they was marching up. I don't know how many was in the bunch, but they was coming up when I was wounded. They were coming up with a white flag.

You were wounded in the leg?

Floyd Jackson: Yeah, high in the leg. It was right where my leg goes on my body.

Was it by an artillery shell?

Floyd Jackson: Yes.

OK, so an exploding artillery shell and you caught the shrapnel from it.

Floyd Jackson: Yeah, that's what killed this sergeant.

What was your reaction when you were hit, other than obviously of pain?

Floyd Jackson: Well, that artillery, it just blowed me plum down. The litter ____ come and got me. In fact, the litter ____ come to me first. They didn't know about the sergeant and that. I told 'em, I said get that sergeant first. He's worse than I am. They went and got him, and then of course there was another litter ____ right there in a little bit and they got me. But that sergeant, I knew he was a lot worse because he was hit in the side. He died right there.

And did you think your wound was serious when you got hit?

Floyd Jackson: No, I didn't know how serious it was.

Was it painful?

Floyd Jackson: Yeah, it was painful. I was in this hospital about three months and then they, I went to evacuation hospital. Then I went back to Paris hospital. And then they sent me to England and then I got over there, I got out of the hospital there. And by that time, there was, the Infantry boys that was wounded, they was sending them to the Air Force and sending the Air Force that was in it to fly to the Infantry to replace the boys that was wounded pretty bad that they didn't think was able to go back to the Infantry. They was sending the Air Force boys that was in to supply to the Infantry and letting the boys that had been wounded in the Air Force.

OK, and did that happen to you?

Floyd Jackson: Yup. They sent me to the Air Force supply, and that's where I spent the rest of my time.

And were was that at?

Floyd Jackson: In England.

In England. OK, so once you were wounded, you spent about three months in the hospital recuperating at one, an evacuation hospital, then in a Paris hospital, and then ultimately in England in a hospital. And that took you about three months before you could function again?

Floyd Jackson: That was all together three months, all together.

Yes.

Floyd Jackson: And then –

I guess you didn't get a chance to see Paris much if you were in the hospital.

Floyd Jackson: No, I didn't see much of Paris, no.

OK, so you were confined to the hospital at the time.

Floyd Jackson: Then I was working in the supply in 8th Air Force, and we were fixin' to go to the Pacific when the war was over. But then the Japanese surrendered, so we didn't go.

So were you in England at the time the Japanese surrendered?

Floyd Jackson: Yeah.

So after the war ended in Europe which was in May of 1945, you still stayed there in England getting ready to go to the Pacific.

Floyd Jackson: Right.

OK, and what were your jobs when they moved you to the Air Force?

Floyd Jackson: I was working in supply with a staff sergeant. We was handling supplies for the aircraft.

OK, and so you still had time to do after the war ended in Europe, so you didn't have enough points or whatever to be able to get out and go home.

Floyd Jackson: Right.

So after May after Germany surrendered, you were still there in Europe waiting to go to Pacific, and then the war ended.

Floyd Jackson: Right. Yeah, I was going, I was performing duty in the Air Force. I just, they said I wasn't able to go back to the Infantry on account of my leg.

Do you recall either day, the day of victory in Europe or the day of the victory over Japan? Do you remember when it all ended and those days, where you were and what you were doing?

Floyd Jackson: I remember it, but I don't remember what day.

OK, but you recall hearing word that the war in Europe was over, that Germany surrendered.

Floyd Jackson: Oh yeah.

And did you think that meant you were gonna go home, or did you think that meant that you were gonna still have to go to the Pacific?

Floyd Jackson: Oh no, I knew I wasn't gonna get to go home because the Pacific war wasn't over.

And you didn't have enough time in I assume. OK, but eventually while you were still there working in supply, you learned that Japan had surrendered also. And I imagine that made you feel pretty good.

Floyd Jackson: Oh yeah, yeah. I was proud to hear that, that we didn't have to go to the Pacific.

And what then did you do after the war was over? Did they send you back to the United States right away or did you stay there for a while?

Floyd Jackson: I stayed there a while. They sent you home on points, and I didn't, I didn't stay there very long.

Did you enjoy your time in England?

Floyd Jackson: Yeah.

What did you think of England?

Floyd Jackson: Oh, it was all right. It wasn't like over here, but it was all right. It was better than France.

I would assume so. OK, so then after you acquired enough points, I assume you were sent home.

Floyd Jackson: Yeah, I was sent home to Camp Fanning, Texas. That was at, where was it, East Texas. I sat out on Christmas Eve, I got home on Christmas Eve night.

Is that right? You mean got back to your home town?

Floyd Jackson: Yeah, I got home.

So you were discharged sometime just before that.

Floyd Jackson: Yeah, I was discharged on Christmas Eve.

You were discharged Christmas Eve, wow, OK, that's an unusual event. And I assume you were very happy to be out of the Army.

Floyd Jackson: Oh yeah, I sure was.

And you headed back home.

Floyd Jackson: I seen my son for the first time.

Is that right?

Floyd Jackson: He was 8-1/2 months old.

And that was the first time you saw him.

Floyd Jackson: That's the first time I seen him.

That must've been quite an event for you.

Floyd Jackson: Yeah.

Wow. It's hard for some of us who weren't involved in anything like that to comprehend having a child and not even seeing it until it was 8-1/2 months old. It must have been a very thrilling time.

Floyd Jackson: Yeah.

OK and so you came home, you were discharged, you were out of the Army. And you were a father.

Floyd Jackson: Yup.

And what have you done since you've been out of the service? What did you do the rest of your time up until now?

Floyd Jackson: Well, I was here on the, I bought this place. My grandmother that lived here on the place, she died right after I got out of the Army, and I bought this place from the heirs. And I've been here ever since.

And so you've been a farmer-rancher the rest of your life?

Floyd Jackson: Farmer-rancher and then I went to work at Fort Hood, here at Killeen, Texas. And I worked there counting my Army time, I retired at 30-1/2 years. I was a welder. I had a welder and a shop, just a shop on a truck that I welded all over Fort Hood. The tank ranges and all of that all over Fort Hood I was a welder.

Where did you get your welding experience and training?

Floyd Jackson: Here at home. I welded all over Fort Hood and then at the last, to get my retirement a little more higher retirement, I was a carpenter work leader, to boost my retirement for three years. They retire you on the high three, so I was a carpenter work leader for three years, so I retired as a carpenter work leader. But I was a welder for 20 something years.

Wow, so you had a long connection with the military then.

Floyd Jackson: Oh yeah, a lot of it.

All of your life has been close to the military.

Floyd Jackson: Yeah, a lot of it.

And how long have you now been retired from -

Floyd Jackson: I retired in '83.

In '83. OK, so you've been I assume being a gentleman farmer, and ever since.

Floyd Jackson: Yeah. I don't do nothin' now. I got my son that's, I turned all of the operation stuff over to him. I got one son left. When I lost my leg, I was in this tractor accident, I lost my leg, I was in Scott & White for three months, didn't expect me to live, but I lived, got over it.

Excuse me, how did the accident happen?

Floyd Jackson: Well, I'm a diabetic and my legs, it got to where I didn't have a lot of use for 'em, and I was shredding in the field and there was a piece of metal in the field and I was gonna move it, and I had one of them little Ford tractors with a shredder on it, and I was gonna move that piece of metal. So I cut the shredder off, raised it, and just pushed the gas up idling, and went to get off, and the little Ford tractor is easy to throw in gear, so when I got off, my legs was, I didn't have too much use for 'em, so and my sugar had dropped, you know, and when I went to get off, I raked that tractor in gear in reverse, and it went to goin' around backwards and I couldn't get to the key to cut it off. Well, and that front wheel hit my leg and knocked me down, and the first thing I knew, that shredder was goin' right over me, and it run over my leg.

Wow. I assume that you were very concerned as to whether you were going to live or die at that moment.

Floyd Jackson: Just a minute, I can't hear you.

OK, you had this terrible accident and the shredder, you lost your leg.

Floyd Jackson: Yeah.

I assume that scared you something awful.

Floyd Jackson: Yeah, anyway I lost my leg and they didn't think I'd make it, but I made it, and I'm in a wheelchair but I'm doin' all right.

Good.

Floyd Jackson: But anyway I got out of the hospital and one month later, I lost my youngest son.

Oh, I'm sorry.

Floyd Jackson: He had a heart attack. That like to kill me. So I've had it pretty rough.

You certainly have sir, you certainly have.

Floyd Jackson: But I'm still here.

Yes, and I'm sure you're very thankful that you still have your wife there to help you and support you through all of this.

Floyd Jackson: Yup. She got back trouble, but she's still here. She's 86. Her birthday is in April. She'll be 86 in April, and I'll be 85 in November.

OK, so you're both still hanging in there very well. Good. OK. I want to go back over a few things just to ask you a few more questions that I might have missed relative to your time in the service and what have you, and one of the questions I would like to ask you is I assume other than the time that you were wounded, did you ever think that you were possibly going to die while you were in combat?

Floyd Jackson: Yes, several times I did.

And did you, were you thinking that you were gonna make it out? Did you always think that you were gonna make it through or were you not sure?

Floyd Jackson: Yeah, I thought, well I thought the good Lord was gonna take care of me and he did.

OK, so you always had faith that somehow, some way you were gonna get through it.

Floyd Jackson: Yeah, right.

OK, and could you tell me whether you observed any particularly really brave acts by anyone while you were in combat?

Floyd Jackson: Oh, there was, you know, there was a lot of brave acts that people would go on patrol and stuff. That would be, we had a lot of people that went on patrol. When you go on patrol, that was -

That was dangerous work.

Floyd Jackson: That was, you know, we had different ones that would go on patrol, and that was a brave act when you had to do that.

Did you ever observe any acts of cowardice?

Floyd Jackson: No, huh-uh, I never did.

Your observations of the American soldier were that he was doing his duty.

Floyd Jackson: Oh yeah, they always done their duty.

How would you compare the American soldier in WWII to the Germans?

Floyd Jackson: Well, I think American soldier is the best soldier there is.

OK, and how about equipment, how did you compare American equipment to the German equipment?

Floyd Jackson: Well, I think ours is the best.

OK, and what German weapons did you fear the most?

Floyd Jackson: Those mortars.

Because they were silent.

Floyd Jackson: Yeah.

And you didn't know it until it hit you.

Floyd Jackson: Yeah. And there was pretty active.

OK. Did you have good experiences with your officers? Did you think they were well trained and knew what they were doing?

Floyd Jackson: Oh yeah, we had good officers.

OK, so you didn't have any concerns thinking that you were being led by people who didn't know how to lead?

Floyd Jackson: No.

OK.

Floyd Jackson: In fact I had my company commander come to see me after I got home a few years ago.

You're kidding.

Floyd Jackson: That's right.

He came to Texas to see you?

Floyd Jackson: Yeah, my company commander come to see me.

Wow. So he hadn't seen you since 1945 and then he came to see you a couple of years ago?

Floyd Jackson: Right.

Wow, that's pretty good.

Floyd Jackson: Yeah, he come out here and I drove him all over my place.

Had you talked to him at any time before that?

Floyd Jackson: Yeah, I send him a Christmas card and he sends me one every year.

Ah, OK, that was a nice way to keep in touch.

Floyd Jackson: Yeah.

All right, I think we've covered just about all of the things we did want to cover. There's a few conclusion type questions that I'd like to ask you. The first one is, looking back now to your military service, how do you think that the military service affected your life?

Floyd Jackson: Well, I guess it grew me up when I was back in those days when I was younger.

You grew up a lot faster than you thought you would.

Floyd Jackson: Yeah, yeah. I know a lot of these young people nowadays that need some of it.

Yeah, they sure do. I get along with you on that one. Do you think of the war years often? Do your experiences in the war come back to you often?

Floyd Jackson: Oh yeah, I think about it a lot. You know, things you go through in them days, you don't forget.

What are the greatest memories that you have of your military life in your military service?

Floyd Jackson: Well I guess the greatest one is when my wife met me in Houston. That would be the greatest one.

OK. All right, and are there memories that you have that you would like to forget.

Floyd Jackson: Yeah.

And I assume those memories involve people you saw who died or were wounded.

Floyd Jackson: That would be them in France.

All right, I'm gonna ask you what I consider my final question. You've been a very good subject to talk to and I certainly have appreciated your time and I want to ask you one other question, and that's this, and you can think about it as long as you want in answering it. Is there anything that you would like to add and to say on the record so that future generations will have a fuller understanding of what your generation went through during WWII?

Floyd Jackson: It would be hard to say.

OK, all right. OK, is there anything else you'd like to add before we conclude our interview?

Floyd Jackson: Well, I just, I would just like to see people have more interest in our country and the things that we stand for and be more like people that we need to take up for our country and what's right.

I think what your saying is we could use a lot of people today who are more like the people when you were young and went out and did the service for your country.

Floyd Jackson: Yeah, I think we need to get back like we was during WWII and the things that's going on nowadays that don't need to be going on, that we need to be united like we was in WWII. I think that we need to get back in those days that we was then.

OK, all right. OK, Mr. Jackson, it was an honor and a privilege to spend this time with you and to go over your service and later life and I just want to say again that we appreciate this opportunity and appreciate the time that you've given us and if there's anything you'd like to add, feel free. Otherwise, we'll say that this interview is complete.

Floyd Jackson: OK, that's fine, thank you.

OK, thank you very much sir.

Floyd Jackson: OK.

[End of recording]